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HON. BILL SALI
OF IDAHO
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Madam Speaker, the 60th birthday of the State of Israel is a time of joyous celebration for all who honor hope, dignity and liberty.

Since even before the First World War, Jewish people from all over the globe have traveled back to their historic homeland. The hope of a secure Jewish homeland was a dream worked for by so many for so long. From dispersion and oppression to bitter pogroms and on through the murderous horror of the Holocaust, the Jewish people have endured more than can be put into words.

Still, through it all, they have persisted and persevered, maintaining their identity, traditions and faith.

On that great day some 60 years ago, the State of Israel declared its independence. Only eleven minutes after Israel did so, President Harry Truman declared America's recognition of the new Jewish State. Since this time, all the leaders of the United States have expressed their support for the State of Israel, and the people of both countries have continually nurtured, promoted and developed their shared values and interests.

President Bush recently made a public statement which summarizes my own views on Israel: "The United States will never abandon its commitment to the security of Israel as a Jewish state and homeland for the Jewish people."

I am an uncompromising advocate for Israel's security and freedom. Anything which infringes upon the rights and welfare of the State of Israel is not in America's interests and must never be tolerated. I have served and will continue to serve proudly on the Congressional Israel Allies Caucus. I have co-sponsored legislation to protect this great nation through condemning ongoing Palestinian rocket attacks on innocent Israel civilians, anti-Semitic rhetoric and the glorification of terrorism.

Support for Israel must remain central to American foreign policy. This support is especially essential given the threats Israel continues to face. The brutal terrorist organization Hamas is an ongoing threat to Israel's well-being. Iran continues to shake its potential nuclear sword against Israel, and Al-Qaeda fights for a foothold in Pakistan in order to spread its viral cruelty all the way to Jerusalem. Syria proudly maintains its hostility to the Jewish State, seeming only to be waiting for an opportune moment to pounce.

We must always help Israel keep a well-armed guard up. To do less would be to breach our national interest and our national honor.

For 60 years, the Israelis have strained and endured in their desert home, overcoming in several major wars, endless attacks and terrorism. Amazingly, out of all of this turmoil, pain, and violence, a home has bloomed out of the Middle Eastern sands for these wonderful individuals who only seek a home for themselves and their families.

Sixty years is an anniversary well worth celebrating. While the pain of the past cannot be eradicated, nor can the courage, fortitude and hope of a people who have endured and triumphed, again and again.

May we all join in the prayer of the 122nd Psalm:

I trust that all my colleagues will join me in saying ``amen" to this prayer.